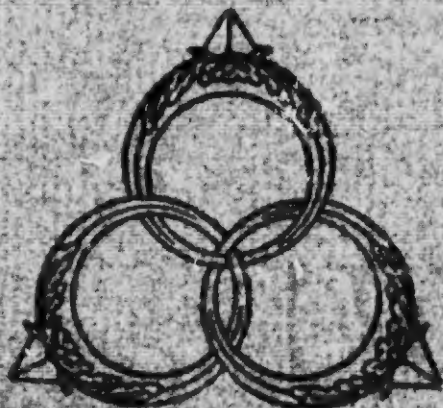


memorabilia

# A BOOK OF CAROLS



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# A BOOK OF CAROLS

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The badge on the cover has been designed by  
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-three rings- used by the early Medici.

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The contents of this volume have been selected with a view to bringing together examples from the chief groups and periods of the carols rather than merely one more collection of those which are best known.

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Note. The greater part of the contents of this volume are, by permission of Editor and Publisher, printed as in Miss Edith Rickert's 'Ancient English Christmas Carols,' issued by Messrs. Chatto and Windus. The last item is, by permission, printed from the Early English Text Society's volume for 1866. The original occurs in Lambeth MS. 306, leaf 136, back. The present version is slightly modernised.

LORDINGS, LISTEN TO OUR LAY

✓ **L**ORDINGS, listen to our lay -  
We have come from far away  
To seek Christmas;  
In this mansion we are told  
He his yearly feast doth hold;  
'Tis to-day!  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.

Lordings, I now tell you true,  
Christmas bringeth unto you  
Only mirth;  
His house he fills with many a dish  
Of bread and meat and also fish,  
To grace the day.  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.

Lordings, through our army's band  
They say - who spends with open hand  
Free and fast,  
And oft regales his many friends -  
God gives him double what he spends,  
To grace the day.  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.



## LORDINGS, LISTEN TO OUR LAY

Lordings, wicked men eschew,  
In them never shall you view  
Aught that 's good;  
Cowards are the rabble rout,  
Kick and beat the grumblers out,  
To grace the day.  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.

To English ale and Gascon wine,  
And French, doth Christmas much incline -  
And Anjou's, too;  
He makes his neighbour freely drink,  
So that in sleep his head doth sink  
Often by day.  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.

Lords, by Christmas and the host  
Of this mansion hear my toast -  
Drink it well -  
Each must drain his cup of wine,  
And I the first will toss off mine:  
Thus I advise.

Here then I bid you all Wassail,  
Cursed be he who will not say, Drinkhail.  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.

Anglo-Norman Carol, translated by F. Douce.



NOWELL, ELL, ELL, ELL,  
MARY WAS GREETED BY GABRIEL.

**M**ARY mother, meek and mild,  
Fro shame and sin that ye us shield,  
For great on ground ye go with child,  
Gabriele nuncio.

Mary mother, be not adread,  
Jesu is in your body bred,  
And of your breast He will be fed,  
Cum pudoris lilio.

Mary mother, the fruit of thee  
For us was nailèd on a tree,  
In heaven is now His majesty,  
Fulget Resurreccio.

Mary mother, the thirdë day  
Up He rose, as I you say,  
To hell He took the rightë way,  
Motu fertur proprio.

Mary mother, after thy Son,  
Up thou styest with Him to wone;  
The angels were glad when thou wert come,  
In celi palacio.

Fifteenth Century.

## REGINA CELI, LETARE

**G**ABRIEL, that angel bright,  
Brighter than the sun is light,  
From heaven to earth he took his flight.  
Letare.

In Nazareth, that great city,  
Before a maiden he kneeled on knee,  
And said, 'Mary, God is with thee.  
Letare.'

'Hail, Mary, full of grace,  
God is with thee and ever was;  
He hath in thee chosen a place.  
Letare.'

Mary was afraid of that sight,  
That came to her with so great light.  
Then said the angel that was so bright,  
'Letare.'

'Be not aghast of least nor most,  
In thee is conceived the Holy Ghost,  
To save the souls that were for-lost.  
Letare.'

Fifteenth Century.

## WHAT, HEARD YE NOT, THE KING OF JERUSALEM

I SHALL you tell a great marvel,  
How an angel, for our avail,  
Came to a maid, and said : ' All hail !'  
What, heard ye not, the King of Jerusalem  
Is now born in Bethlehem ?

' All hail,' he said, ' and full of grace,  
God is with thee now in this place,  
A child thou shalt bear in little space.'  
What, heard ye not, the King of Jerusalem  
Is now born in Bethlehem ?

' A child !' she said. ' How may that be ?  
There had never no man knowledge of me.'  
' The Holy Ghost,' he said, ' shall light in thee.'  
What, heard ye not, the King of Jerusalem  
Is now born in Bethlehem ?

' And as thou art, so shalt thou be,'  
The angel said, ' in virginity,  
Before and after in every degree.'  
What, heard ye not, the King of Jerusalem  
Is now born in Bethlehem ?

## WHAT, HEARD YE NOT

The maid answered the angel again :


‘If God will that this be sayn,  
The wordes be to me full fain.’

What, heard ye not, the King of Jerusalem  
Is now born in Bethlehem?

Now will we all, in rejoicing  
That we have heard this good tiding,  
To that Child ‘Te Deum’ sing:  
‘Te Deum laudamus.’

Before 1536.

## ‘QUID PETIS, O FILI?’

UID petis, O Fili?  
Mater dulcissima ba ba :  
‘Quid petis, O Fili?  
Michi plausus oscula da da!’

So laughing in lap laid,  
So prettily, so pertly,  
So passingly well apaid,  
Full softly and full soberly,  
Unto her sweet Son she said :

‘Quid petis, O Fili?’  
Mater dulcissima ba ba :  
‘Quid petis, O Fili?  
Michi plausus oscula da da!’

‘Pleased.

·QUID PETIS, O FILI?·

The mother full mannerly and meekly as a maid,  
Looking on her little Son so laughing in lap laid,  
So prettily, so pertly, so passingly well apaid,  
So passingly well apaid,  
Full softly and full soberly,  
Unto her Son she said :

·Quid petis, O Fili?·

Mater dulcissima ba ba :

·Quid petis, O Fili?

Michi plausus oscula da da !'

I mean this by Mary, our Maker's mother of  
might,

Full lovely looking on our Lord, the Lantern of  
light,

Thus saying to our Saviour, this saw I in my  
sight;

This reason that [I] rede in now, I rede it full  
right.

·Quid petis, O Fili?·

Mater dulcissima ba ba :

·Quid petis, O Fili?

Michi plausus oscula da da !'

Musing on her manners so, my word was my  
main,

Save it pleased me so passingly that past was  
my pain;

**‘QUID PETIS, O FILI?’**

Yet softly to her sweet Son methought I heard  
her sayn :

‘Now gracious God, and good sweet Babe, yet  
once again this game.

“Quid petis, O Fili?”

Mater dulcissima ba ba :

“Quid petis, O Fili?

Michi plausus oscula da da !”

Temp. Henry VII or VIII.

**OUT OF THE ORIENT, CRYSTAL SKIES**



UT of the orient, crystal skies

A blazing star did shine,

Showing the place where poorly lies

A blessed Babe divine,

Born of a maid of royal blood

Who Mary hight by name,

A sacred rose which once did bud

By grace of heavenly flame.

This shining star three kings did guide

Even from the furthest East,

To Bethlehem where it betide

This blessed Babe did rest,

## OUT OF THE ORIENT, CRYSTAL SKIES

Laid in a silly manger poor,  
Betwixt an ox and ass,  
Whom these three kings did all adore  
As God's high pleasure was.

And for the joy of His great birth  
A thousand angels sing:  
'Glory and peace unto the earth  
Where born is this new King!'

The shepherds dwelling there about,  
Where they this news did know,  
Came singing all even in a rout,  
'Falantidingdic!'

About 1613.

## WORSHIP WE THIS HOLY DAY, THAT ALL INNOCENTS FOR US PRAY.

**H**EROD that was both wild and wode,  
Full much he shed of Christian blood,  
To slay that Child so meek of mood,  
That Mary bare, that clean may.

Mary with Jesu forth yfraught,  
As the angel her taught,  
'To flee the land till it were sought,  
'To Egypt she took her way.



## WORSHIP WE THIS HOLY DAY

Herod slew with pride and sin  
Thousands of two year and within;  
The body of Christ he thought to win  
And to destroy the Christian fay.

Now Jesus that didst die for us on the Rood,  
And didst christen innocents in their blood,  
By the prayer of Thy mother good,  
Bring us to bliss that lasteth ay.

Before 1529.

## GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

**G**OD rest you merry, Gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born upon this day,  
To save us all from Satan's power,  
When we were gone astray.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.

In Bethlehem in Jewry  
This blessed babe was born,  
And laid within a manger  
Upon this blessed morn :

## GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

The which His mother Mary  
Nothing did take in scorn.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.

From God our heavenly Father  
A blessed angel came,  
And unto certain shepherds  
Brought tidings of the same,  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by name.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.

‘Fear not,’ then said the angel,  
‘Let nothing you affright,  
This day is born a Saviour  
Of virtue, power, and might;  
So frequently to vanquish all  
The friends of Satan quite.’  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.

The shepherds at those tidings  
Rejoicèd much in mind,  
And left their flocks a-feeding  
In tempest, storm, and wind,

## **GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN**


**And went to Bethlehem straightway,  
This blessed Babe to find.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.**

**But when to Bethlehem they came,  
Whereas this Infant lay,  
They found Him in a manger  
Where oxen feed on hay;  
His mother Mary kneeling  
Unto the Lord did pray.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.**

**Now to the Lord sing praises,  
All you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood  
Each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
All others doth deface.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born on  
Christmas Day.**

**Traditional.**

## OUT OF YOUR SLEEP ARISE AND WAKE

 UT of your sleep arise and wake,  
For God mankind now hath ytake,  
All of a maid without any make;<sup>1</sup>  
Of all women she beareth the bell.  
Nowell.

And through a maiden fair and wise  
Now man is made of full great price;  
Now angels kneelen to man's service;  
And at this time all this befell.  
Nowell.

Now man is brighter than the sun;  
Now man in heaven on high shall wone;  
Blessed be God, this game is begun,  
And His mother empress of hell.  
Nowell.

That ever was thrall, now is he free;  
That ever was small, now great is she;  
Now shall God deem both thee and me  
Unto His bliss, if we do well.  
Nowell.

<sup>1</sup> Mate.

## OUT OF YOUR SLEEP ARISE AND WAKE

Now man may to heaven wend;  
Now heaven and earth to him they bend;  
He that was foe now is our friend.  
This is no nay that I you tell.  
Nowell.

Now blessed Brother, grant us grace,  
At Doom'sday to see Thy face,  
And in Thy court to have a place,  
That we may there sing nowell.  
Nowell.

About 1450.

## THIS DAY

An heavenly song, I dare well say,  
Is sung on earth to man this day.

**T**HIS is the song that ye shall hear,  
God is come from His empire,  
And is made man with high desire.  
This day.

He took our kind all of a maid,  
By ox and ass He was ylaide,  
Now is fulfilled that Scripture said,  
This day.

## THIS DAY

Ay I wonder this in my mind,  
That He that all may loose and bind,  
Would be laid by beasts unkind,  
This day.

He is a lord and by nature  
A maiden's breast he sucked full pure.  
Heaven and earth be in His cure,  
This day.

About 1450.

## NOW IS WELL, AND ALL THINGS ARIGHT

**N**OW is well, and all things aright,  
And Christ is come as a true knight;  
For our Brother is King of might,  
The fiend to fleme<sup>1</sup> and all his.  
Thus the fiend is put to flight,  
And all his boast abated is.

Sithen it is, well must we do,  
For there is none but one of two,  
Heaven to get or heaven forego,  
Other mean none there is;  
I counsel you, since it is so,  
That you well do to win you bliss.

<sup>1</sup> Rout.

## NOW IS WELL

Now is well and all is well,  
And right well, so have I bliss;  
And sithen all things are so well,  
I rede we do no more amiss.

Fifteenth century.

## ALL BELLS IN PARADISE



VER yonder's a park, which is newly  
begun,  
All bells in Paradise, I heard them a-  
ring;  
Which is silver on the outside and gold within,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.

And in that park there stands a hall,  
All bells in Paradise I heard them a-ring;  
Which is covered all over with purple and pall,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.

And in that hall there stands a bed,  
All bells in Paradise I heard them a-ring;  
Which is hung all round with silk curtains so  
red,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.



## ALL BELLS IN PARADISE

And in that bed there lies a knight,  
All bells in Paradise I heard them a-ring;  
Whose wounds they do bleed by day and by  
night,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.

At that bedside there lies a stone,  
All bells in Paradise I heard them a-ring;  
Which is our blessed Virgin Mary then kneel-  
ing on,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.

At that bed's foot there lies a hound,  
All bells in Paradise I heard them a-ring;  
Which is licking the blood as it daily runs down,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.

At that bed's head there grows a thorn,  
All bells in Paradise I heard them a-ring;  
Which was never so blossomed since Christ was  
born,  
And I love sweet Jesus above all thing.

Traditional.

## MAN, BE MERRY

Man, be joyful and mirth thou make,  
For Christ is made man for thy sake.

**M**AN, be merry, I thee rede,  
But beware what mirths thou make;  
Christ is clothed in thy weed,  
And He is made man for thy sake.

He came fro His Father's seat,  
Into this world to be thy make;<sup>1</sup>  
Man, beware how thou Him treat,  
For He is made man for thy sake.

Lord thou mercy every cry,  
Now and alway, rathe<sup>2</sup> and late;  
And He will set thee wonder high,  
For He is made man for thy sake.

Temp. Henry VII or VIII.

<sup>1</sup> Mate.

<sup>2</sup> Early.

## A HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF MY SAVIOUR

**I** SING the birth was born to-night,  
The Author both of life and light;  
The angels so did sound it.  
And like the ravished shepherds said,  
Who saw the light and were afraid,  
Yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God, th' eternal King,  
That d'ld us all salvation bring,  
And freed the soul from danger;  
He whom the whole world could not take,  
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,  
Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,  
The Son's obedience knew no No,  
Both wills were in one stature;  
And as that wisdom had decreed,  
The Word was now made flesh indeed,  
And took on Him our nature.

What comfort by Him d' we win,  
Who made Himself the price of sin,  
To make us heirs of glory!  
To see this Babe all innocence;  
A Martyr born in our defence;  
Can man forget the story?

Ben Jonson. 1573(?) - 1637.

d

## FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

**I**MMORTAL Babe, who this dear day  
Did'st change Thine heaven for our clay,  
And did'st with flesh Thy Godhead veil,  
Eternal Son of God, all hail!

Shine, happy star; ye angels, sing  
Glory on high to heaven's King;  
Run, shepherds, leave your nightly watch,  
See heaven come down to Bethlehem's cratch.<sup>1</sup>

Worship, ye sages of the east,  
The King of gods in meanness dressed;  
O blessed maid, smile and adore  
The God thy womb and arms have bore.

Star, angels, shepherds, and wise sages,  
Thou virgin glory of all ages,  
Restored frame of heaven and earth,  
Joy in your dear Redeemer's birth!

Bishop Hall. 1574-1636.

<sup>1</sup> Crib.

## CHRISTMAS

**A**LL after pleasures as I rode one day,  
My horse and I both tired, body and  
mind,  
With full cry of affections quite astray,  
I took up in the next inn I could find.

There, when I came, whom found I but my dear-  
My dearest Lord; expecting till the grief  
Of pleasures brought me to Him, ready there  
To be all passengers' most sweet relief?

O Thou, whose glorious yet contracted light  
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger;  
Since my dark soul and brutish is Thy right,  
To man, of all beasts be not Thou a stranger:

Furnish and deck my soul, that Thou mayst have  
A better lodging than a rack or grave.  
The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?  
My God, no hymn for Thee?  
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds  
Of thoughts and words and deeds.  
The pasture is Thy word, the streams Thy grace,  
Enriching every place.

Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers  
Outsing the daylight hours.

## CHRISTMAS

Then we will chide the sun for letting night  
Take up his place and right:  
We sing one common Lord; wherefore He  
should  
Himself the candle hold.

I will go searching till I find a sun  
Shall stay till we have done;  
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly  
As frost-nipt suns look sadly.  
Then we will sing and shine all our own day,  
And one another pay.  
His beams shall cheer my heart, and both so  
twine,  
Till e'en his beams sing and my music shine.  
George Herbert, 1593-1633.

## THE BURNING BABE

**A**S I in hoary winter's night stood shivering  
in the snow,  
Surprised I was with sudden heat which  
made my heart to glow;

And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was  
near,  
A pretty Babe all burning bright did in the air  
appear,

## THE BURNING BABE

Who scorched with excessive heat such floods  
of tears did shed,  
As though his floods should quench his flames  
which with his tears were fed.

‘Alas!’ quoth he, ‘but newly born in fiery  
heats I fry,  
Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel  
my fire but I!

‘My faultless heart the furnace is, the fuel  
wounding thorns;  
Love is the fire and sighs the smoke, the ashes  
shame and scorns;

‘The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows  
the coals;  
The metal in this furnace wrought are men’s  
defiled souls;

‘For which, as now on fire I am, to work them to  
their good,  
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my  
blood.’

With that he vanished out of sight and swiftly  
shrunk away,  
And straightway I called into mind that it was  
Christmas Day.

Robert Southwell, 1595.



## CHRIST'S NATIVITY<sup>1</sup>

**A**WAKE, glad heart! get up and sing!  
It is the birthday of thy King.  
Awake! Awake!  
The sun doth shake  
Light from his locks, and all the way  
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake! awake! hark how th' wood rings,  
Winds whisper, and the busy springs  
A concert make.

Awake! Awake!  
Man is their high priest, and should rise  
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,  
Fluttering in woods, or lifted far  
Above this inn  
And road of sin;  
Then either star or bird should be  
Shining or singing still to Thee.

I would I had in my best part  
Fit rooms for Thee! or that my heart  
Were so clean as  
Thy manger was!

<sup>1</sup> Silex Scintillans.

## CHRIST'S NATIVITY

But I am all filth, and obscene;  
Yet, if Thou wilt, Thou can'st make me clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more  
This leper haunt and soil Thy door!

Cure him, ease him,

O release him!

And let once more, by mystic birth,  
The Lord of life be born in earth.

Henry Vaughan, 1630-63.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

### Chorus

**W**HAT sweeter music can we bring,  
Than a carol, for to sing  
The birth of this our heavenly King?  
Awake the voice! Awake the string!  
Heark, ear, and eye, and everything,  
Awake! the while the active finger  
Runs divisions with the singer.

(From the flourish they come to the song.)

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,  
And give the honour to this day,  
That sees December turn'd to May.  
If we may ask the reason, say

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

The why and wherefore all things here  
Seem like the springtime of the year?  
Why does the chilling winter's morn  
Smile like a field beset with corn?  
Or smell like to a mead new-shorn,  
Thus on the sudden? Come and see  
The cause why things thus fragrant be:  
'Tis He is born whose quickening birth  
Gives life and lustre public mirth  
To heaven and the under-earth.

Chorus. We see Him come, and know Him ours,  
Who with His sunshine and His showers  
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The Darling of the world is come,  
And fit it is we find a room  
To welcome Him. The nobler part  
Of all the house here, is the heart.

Chorus. Which we will give him; and bequeath  
This holly and this ivy wreath,  
To do him honour who's our King,  
The Lord of all this revelling.

Robert Herrick, 1648.

## THE HOLLY AND THE IVY<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE holly and the ivy  
Now are both well grown;  
Of all the trees that are in the wood  
The holly bears the crown.  
The rising of the sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom  
As white as lily flower;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To be our sweet Saviour.  
The rising of the sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a berry,  
As red as any blood;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
To do poor sinners good.  
The rising of the sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.

<sup>1</sup> Printed in a broadside as early as 1710.

## THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

The holly bears a prickle  
As sharp as any thorn;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
On Christmas day in the morn.  
The rising of the sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a bark  
As bitter as any gall;  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
For to redeem us all.  
The rising of the sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly and the ivy  
Now are both well grown;  
Of all the trees that are in the wood,  
The holly bears the crown.  
The rising of the sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry organ,  
Sweet singing in the choir.

Traditional.

A GREETING ON NEW YEAR'S  
MORNING

**J**EWELLIS precious can I none find to sell  
To send to you, my Sovereign, this New  
Year's morrow,  
Wherefor, for luck and good hansel,  
My heart I send you, and Saint John to borrow,  
That an C' years withouten adversity and  
sorrow  
Ye may live; I pray to God that ye so may  
And of all your desires to send you hastily  
bot.<sup>1</sup>

Beseeching you, dear heart, as entirely as I can  
To take in gree this poor gift onely for my sake,  
As is the custom and hath been many a day,  
One friend to another give and take.  
Rich is it not, great boast of to make,  
Save a heart is remembrative to you in  
every stounde  
The which perished once, yet green is the  
wound.

That it be yours, truly it is my list;  
My possession and my part thereof I deny;

<sup>1</sup> Hundred.

<sup>2</sup> Fulfilment.

## A GREETING

And as touching to this old world called 'had I  
wist,

Unto my life's end full I defy.

Palamon gave his heart to Emely;

He vouched it no better, nor repented it less

Than I do of this gift, God I take to witness.

My purpose hath been long my heart thus to  
chast,

And till this year's day I durst not for shame.

Men say that nothing is so free as gift,

And to take it again I were full to blame.

But as in that default I will not lese my name,

So that I give once be given for evermore,

For this hath love and truth I learned me  
the lore,

Evermore - without change for ever

Till body and soul part and dissever.

From Lambeth MS. 306.



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